

Amendments to the Claims

The following Listing of Claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): ~~An~~A machine-implemented inventory planning method, comprising ~~planning~~computing ~~an optimal safety stock level for a product~~ to cover uncertainty in demand over an exposure period with a desired service level based at least in part ~~upon~~on a cost of obtaining the product availability from ~~a~~one or more spot market sources.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein ~~safety stock level~~
~~planning~~the computing comprises:

~~estimating~~determining a maximum safety stock level of the product to cover ~~the~~ uncertainty in demand over the exposure period with the desired service level based upon ~~product availability~~with the product being supplied solely from ~~a~~one or more non-spot~~spot~~-market supplysources; and

~~estimating an optimal safety stock level by reducing the maximum safety stock level~~ based upon product availability from a spot market supply.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method of claim 2, wherein the ~~determining~~
~~comprises determining~~ the maximum safety stock level ~~estimation~~ is based in part upon an ~~estimation~~a measure of lead time for obtaining the product from the ~~one or more~~ non-spot~~spot~~-market supplysources.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The method of claim 3, wherein the ~~determining~~
~~comprises determining~~ the maximum safety stock level ~~estimation~~ is based in part upon an ~~estimation~~a measure of lead time uncertainty ~~for~~associated with the obtaining of the product from the ~~one or more~~ non-spot~~spot~~-market supplysources.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The method of claim 24, wherein the determining comprises determining the maximum safety stock level estimation is based in part upon an estimation measure of demand for the product.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method of claim 5, wherein the determining comprises determining the maximum safety stock level estimation is based in part upon an estimation measure of demand uncertainty for the product.

Claim 7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of claim 2, wherein the computing comprises reducing the maximum safety stock level comprises estimating based on a total cost of covering the maximum safety stock level with a combination of a first amount of the product supplied received from the one or more spot market sources and a second amount of the product supplied received from the one or more non-spot market supply sources.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim 8, wherein the computing comprises iteratively reducing the second amount of the product from an initial amount equal to the maximum safety stock level and determining the total cost the total cost is estimated based in part upon an estimation of the expected amount of spot market product needed to cover uncertainty in demand over the exposure period with the desired service level for a given amount of non-spot market product.

Claims 10 and 11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of claim 89, wherein estimating the optimal safety stock level the computing comprises repeating the reducing of the second amount of the product and the determining of the total cost until the minimizing the estimated total cost is minimized.

Claim 13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of claim 21, wherein the ~~optimal safety stock level is estimated based at least in part upon computing~~ comprises performing a stochastic simulation of one or more random variables.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The method of claim 21, further comprising ordering the optimal safety stock level from the one or more non-spot-market supply sources.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method of claim 215, further comprising ordering from the one or more spot market supply sources a product level needed to meet actual demand for the product above the optimal safety stock level and within the desired service level.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The method of claim 16, wherein the ordering from the one or more spot market sources comprises navigating a web site providing information relating to the one or more spot market sources.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein ~~planning the safety stock level~~ the computing comprises navigating a web site providing information relating to ~~use of the~~ one or more spot market to plan an inventory levels sources.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The method of claim 18, wherein ~~planning the safety stock level~~ the computing comprises providing to an inventory planning engine accessible through the web site transmitting from the web site information relating to product demand for the product and information relating to non-spot market lead time for obtaining the product from one or more non-spot-market sources.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising performing enterprise resource planning based upon the planned computed optimal safety stock level.

Claim 21 (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the safety stock level is planned based at least in part on computing comprises minimizing a total spot market

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product cost as a function of covering the uncertainty in demand over the exposure period with the desired service level with a first amount of the product supplied by the one or more spot market sources and a second amount of the product supplied by one or more non-spot-market sources.